

Meeting:	NuLeAF Steering Group, 7 June 2016
Agenda Item:	6
Subject:	Update on the GDF siting process
Author:	Philip Matthews
Purpose:	To report on recent developments related to the Geological Disposal Facility

Introduction:

This report provides an update on recent developments related to the process for identifying a Geological Disposal Facility. It covers:

- Community Representation Working Group;
- GDF Stakeholder Action Group;
- NuLeAF/RWM event at Local Government Association (LGA) conference;
- RWM Societal Aspects report;
- CoRWM update;
- National Policy Statement on the GDF; and
- National Geological Screening.

Recommendation:

This report is for noting.

Background information

The Call for Evidence can be found on the DECC website¹, as can information on the Communities Representation Working Group².

You can read more about the national geological screening exercise on RWM's website³ and find out about the Independent Review Panel on that of the Geological Society (see page 3, footnote 3).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementing-geological-disposal-working-with-communities>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/implementing-geological-disposal-community-representation-working-group>

³ <http://www.nda.gov.uk/rwm/national-geological-screening/>

1. Community Representation Working Group

The final meeting of the CRWG took place on the April 20th. The aim of this meeting was to reach a consensus on the agreed position on all the issues the Group had been considering.

An outline of the proposed approach was presented to the meeting as the basis for discussions and for further refinement or alteration of recommendations. There was general agreement on the approach set out in the paper submitted to the Group, although a number of alterations were proposed. In terms of the main issues:

Defining 'community' There was broad agreement that 'community' should be based on existing local government boundaries, perhaps those of the lower tier authority or authorities within which the GDF would be located. Virtually anyone with an interest in an area could propose entry into the siting process (e.g. landowner, local authority, community organisation) but the relevant local authorities should be engaged at an early stage even if another individual or group initiates the process.

Ongoing engagement should take place with all in the community from the inception of any local partnership through to the test of support.

Siting Partnership This should have 12-16 members consisting of relevant local authorities along with key local stakeholders, to be locally defined. It may be useful for RWM to fund an independent Chair for the group, especially for the early stages of bringing the Partnership together. RWM will fund all running costs of the group including secretariat staff.

Community investment This should be available to all within the community as defined at the outset of the process, though there may be a weighting applied so that those most directly affected by the GDF would receive additional funds. Community funds might best be managed by a group that was arms-length from the Siting Partnership. RWM will fund running costs for the management of community investment funds.

Test of public support There may be some flexibility on what method is used to test support of the community. However there was a general view that a local referendum had more credibility than other possible methods.

Right of withdrawal The community can withdraw at any stage up to the final Test of Public Support. Once the community has been involved in the siting process for some time, and there is a good level of awareness of what is proposed, it has been suggested that any proposal to withdraw should be subject to a formal consultation rather than being a decision of the Siting Partnership.

Based on the comments made, a revised paper will be prepared and submitted to Ministers who may accept or alter elements of the paper. A public consultation on proposals is now expected in autumn 2016 and it is now anticipated that communities will be able to enter into the formal siting process from May 2017.

2. GDF Stakeholder Action Group

RWM convened the first meeting of a **GDF Stakeholder Action Group** in London on the 25th May. NuLeAF has been invited to be a member of the Group, and the Vice-Chair and Executive Director attended. Other organisations involved in the group are the LEP Network, Institute of Directors, Prospect Trade Union, the Nuclear Industry Association (NIA), and various UK Government Departments (BIS, Defra, DCLG, DECC) along with RWM and the NDA.

The aim of the Group is to advise and guide RWM as it develops its 'offer' to communities, and to ensure that communications and engagement are effective and aligned with central and local government and business agendas. Further meetings of the group are planned in the coming months.

3. NuLeAF/RWM event at Local Government Association (LGA) conference

In partnership with RWM, NuLeAF is hosting a fringe event at this years' Local Government Association (LGA) conference in Bournemouth. The event will be titled '**Local benefits of hosting major infrastructure projects – myth or fact**' and will be held at 6.30pm on July the 5th.

An expert panel will deliver presentations on a range of infrastructure projects and this will be followed by a discussion. Panel members are:

- David Toman, Chief Executive of the Prince's Foundation for Building Community who will speak on reawakening industrial 'brownfield' sites with sustainable community regeneration;
- Sedgemoor District Council's Corporate Director, Doug Bamsey who will speak on leveraging non-nuclear commercial investments from Hinkley Point;
- Graham Dalton, who has been Chief Executive of the Highways Agency, Director of the Strategic Rail Authority and now advises the World Bank who will talk on transport infrastructure;
- Rupert Clubb, the newly elected President of ADEPT (the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport); and
- Bruce McKirdy, Managing Director of RWM, who will speak on the transformative socio-economic impacts of geological disposal facilities

The event will be chaired by Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman of Crossrail 2 Growth Commission and former Chairman of the Local Government Association and will be followed by a drinks reception. NuLeAF members attending the LGA conference are welcome to come along.

4. Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) Update

In early spring, government launched a process for recruitment of new members of CoRWM. It is understood that there were a high number of applicants for the available places. A public announcement of the new Committee members is expected shortly.

5. RWM Societal Aspects Report

RWM has published a detailed report on the 'societal aspects' of geological disposal. It provides a review of the current knowledge base and practice around community engagement, partnership working, risk perception and intergenerational issues as they relate to geological disposal. It also highlights research based on other large infrastructure projects such as high speed rail, carbon capture and storage and shale gas exploration. The report can be found here⁴.

6. National Policy Statement on the GDF

A revised draft National Policy Statement (NPS) on the GDF has been produced. The timetable for government plans to consult on the **National Policy Statement**, along with the full **Appraisal of Sustainability and Habitat Regulations Assessment** has altered, and it is now likely that this consultation, along with that on the Communities aspects of the GDF, will take place in autumn 2016. NuLeAF will alert members to this consultation when announced. In parallel, parliamentary scrutiny of the draft NPS will be undertaken.

7. National Geological Screening

The revised **National Geological Screening Guidance**, along with detailed technical instructions and the RWM 'response to consultation' were published on the 21st April. These documents were endorsed by the Geological Society's Independent Review Plan. All documents are available here⁵.

NuLeAF understands that RWM plans further discussion and engagement on the geological aspects of the GDF later in the year but has no further details of this as yet.

⁴ <https://rwm.nda.gov.uk/publication/societal-aspects-of-geological-disposal/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-consultation-on-national-geological-screening>